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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4933  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RHMFIUU/TSA HQ WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION WASHINGTON DC  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GEORGETOWN 000293

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [EAIR](#) [CARICOM](#) [GY](#)

SUBJECT: Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Guyana and CARICOM--A  
Time-Consuming Maze

Ref: A) 06 State 188799, B) Georgetown 206

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Summary  
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11. (SBU) In late November 2006 post delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) proposing an arrangement for the deployment of armed Federal Air Marshals (FAM) on flights between the United States and Guyana to bolster counterterrorism efforts in the region (ref A). Despite multiple conversations by phone and in person with a range of players in several ministries and the Office of the President, the attempt to get a formal reply from the government initially seemed fruitless. This despite the fact that President Jagdeo told the DCM in early December that concluding an FAM agreement was a priority for him that he wanted to see completed within two weeks. Eventually, on February 14, the GoG agreed to take part in the Federal Air Marshal Program. The journey of the Diplomatic Note from one government office to another offered insight into the maze that constitutes foreign policy decision-making within the administration, a journey that can best be characterized as long and winding with a detour to CARICOM. End Summary.

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Take the By-way to Caricom and Start All Over  
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12. (SBU) After post delivered the FAM diplomatic note to Guyana's MFA on November 21, a Diplomatic Note from Guyana's MFA dated December 5 indicated that a response would be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy "shortly." On December 7, President Bharrat Jagdeo told the DCM he was in favor of setting up a FAM arrangement and said that if the Embassy did not hear from the MFA in two weeks to let him know. By the middle of December, calls to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the Diplomatic Note was with Dr. Roger Luncheon, Head of the Presidential Secretariat in the Office of the President. In early January, subsequent calls to the MFA revealed little progress but did generate a series of questions from the MFA: Have any other CARICOM countries been requested to take part in the FAM arrangement, or are any existing arrangements in place in the region, etc.

13. (SBU) By January 22, the MFA received the Diplomatic Note back from the President's Office and told EconOFF that they were preparing a response. Later in the week, MFA Director General explained the latest delay to the DCM: There is an understanding among CARICOM members that they inform and consult with each other before entering into any agreements with third countries. That consultation was in process, and the cut off point for replies had passed. Now the MFA would consult again with Luncheon to get permission to move forward. This was one week after Luncheon told

the DCM that he had sent the FAM issue back to the Foreign Minister for action, and two weeks after the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President Dr. Nanda Gopaul confirmed again that the President was in favor of the agreement and had instructed the Minister of Home Affairs to conclude the issue.

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We're Almost There  
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¶4. (SBU) During a January 30 telephone conversation with the DCM, Ambassador Harper raised the issue of the FAM arrangement. Frustrated yet optimistic, she said, "I'm still trying." Even with apparent concurrence of GoG officials, the journey of the FAM Diplomatic Note was not yet complete. Two weeks later, almost three months after the original request, Guyana's MFA delivered its reply Diplomatic Note signing on to the Federal Air Marshal Program, becoming the first in the Caribbean to do so.

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Intra-Government Communication Snag  
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¶5. (SBU) A few weeks later in early March, EconOff organized a meeting with visiting TSA representatives to review the procedural protocol for the Federal Air Marshal program with GoG Civil Aviation Authority, Customs, Police, Airport and MFA officials. During phone conversations to the various invitees it was clear that the MFA had not informed any of these critical players of the agreement or their role - even though the agreement became effective more than three weeks earlier. The first working day after that meeting, the MFA attendee requested a list of the meeting participants so she could send them official notification of the FAM program.

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Comment  
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¶6. (SBU) Although the final result was positive, the process provided an interesting glimpse at the government's circuitous decision-making course, shedding light as well on foreign policy coordination with CARICOM. And, after all the delays, it's striking that none of the implementers within the government had been notified or appeared aware of the agreement at all. On the bright side, in a hollow government, a hollow clearance process makes perfect sense.

ROBINSON